

the determined self-injury of a patient who had a habit of beating his head with increasing violence against the wall. We fitted up, for this man, a "padded room," by means of which he has enjoyed a freedom of motion, and an amount of liberty, which could in no other way be accorded to him.

"Cases of extreme destructiveness occasionally arise, setting all ordinary care utterly at defiance. One such we had recently, when the constant presence, by day and by night, of one, generally two, and often three attendants, was insufficient to prevent the destruction of property and the serious disturbance of the other patients. The propensity was at last overcome by continued kindness, and by a determined refusal to sanction the application of any restraining apparatus." (1861.)

We do not perceive how the refusal to apply mechanical restraint assisted in overcoming the fury of the patient, unless he feigned his fury for the sole purpose of being placed under such restraint. Although we are in favour of reducing restraint to its wholesome minimum, and, as early as 1845 and 1846, did, as we believe, reduce it to a lower amount than had ever theretofore been attained on this side of the Atlantic, yet we must candidly avow our belief that the above case was badly treated. We think that less evil would have arisen to the patient himself, if he had been placed, alone, in a vacant room, with his hands securely and comfortably (for that can be done) confined by a strong camisole.

There are many patients who, if they were placed under the surveillance of *three* special attendants, would continue their violence (when otherwise it would have subsided) through irritation or anger, or from "spite," or, if from neither of these causes, then merely "for the fun of the thing," and to show those attendants, as Sam. Patch, when he was about to leap from the cataract, said that he wished to show the world, that "some things can be done as well as others."

"Excursions to the country in summer, sleigh-drives in the winter, visits to interesting exhibitions in the city occasionally, and attendance at the village church on Sundays, have, during the past year, relieved the tedium of daily routine." (1861.)

A billiard table, a piano forte, books, engravings, &c., have been presented to the institution; and by a sum raised by subscription, bagatelle, back-gammon, and draught-boards, footballs, pictures and toys, have been purchased. The list of "acknowledgments" is long in each of the last reports, and hence we conclude that the Nova Scotia Hospital for the Insane is, as it ought to be, a centre of popular interest and sympathy.

P. E.

---

ART. XXIV.—*On Diseases of the Skin.* By ERASMIUS WILSON, F. R. S. Fifth American from the fifth and revised London edition. With plates and illustrations on wood. Philadelphia: Blanchard & Lea, 1863. 8vo. pp. 694.

A REVIEW of the fourth edition of this work was given in the number of this Journal for October, 1857. The peculiarities of the treatise of Mr. Wilson on diseases of the skin, which render it far superior to any other in the English language, are there carefully and fully pointed out and commented upon. We believe, however, that the great value of the work, and the additions made to the present edition, call for something more on the present occasion than the simple announcement of the appearance of a new edition, and the mere indication of the points in which this volume differs from its predecessor.

Mr. Wilson's treatise is not simply what its title indicates; that is, if we are to judge from what is generally contained in works bearing the title on "Diseases of the Skin." It contains a great deal more than a detailed description of the vesicular, papular, pustular, and other eruptive affections that are witnessed on the external covering of the body. As distinguishing it from all others it might be styled a treatise on the skin and its appendages, the hair and the nails, and

the sudoriparous and sebiparous glands, their normal and pathological anatomy and physiology; with an account of their diseases and of the affections in which a disorder of these parts is a prominent symptom, together with their proper treatment.

Owing to the manner in which they are always treated of in medical writings, diseases of the skin bear about the same relation to other groups of disease, that the irregular verbs in a grammar bear to the regular conjugations. As disconnected, unlike all others, and difficult to remember, their study is universally disliked. From the way, however, in which the whole subject has been comprehended by Mr. Wilson, skin diseases are, so to speak, regularized, and their study in the work before us is anything but disagreeable. Indeed, it can be said with truth, that so readable and so satisfactory a medical work is rarely met with.

After an excellent account of the anatomy and physiology of the skin, the sudoriparous and the sebiparous systems, and the hairs and nails, Mr. Wilson, in a separate chapter, enters upon the subject of the classification of diseases of skin, and exposes in a way that cannot be too much admired the manner in which such a classification should be conducted.

*L'œil ne voit pas ce qui le touche*, 'the eye does not see the object that touches it,' is a favourite maxim which may be applied on this occasion, where, precisely because diseases are directly visible immediately under the eye, we do not judge of them correctly. It is from classifying diseases to which the skin is subject, almost entirely according to what is told of them by the eye, that so little practical benefit results. For example, on the scalp true papulæ are never seen, and vesicles very rarely. On the hands, and especially the fingers, vesicles and pustules are frequent; but on the rest of the surface of the body lichen is the common type. So that, in a general eruption, produced by one and the same cause, occurring upon the entire surface of the body, we would have erythema in one part, lichen in another, eczema in a third, possibly impetigo in a fourth, and psoriasis in a fifth. Now if we should follow the generality of treatises on diseases of the skin in presence of such a case, we would see here five different and distinct complaints belonging to five different orders of disease, and possibly think it necessary, in order to follow what we have read as to the proper course to pursue, to prescribe five different modes of treatment. In a practical point of view, and taking other things into consideration besides what we can see, there is here but one disease, an inflammatory eruption, exhibiting in various parts of the body the five usual modes of manifestation of cutaneous inflammation, and all amenable to the same treatment. For practical purposes, diseases of the skin should be arranged according to their causes; the classification should be etiological. To convince any one who may be at all skeptical on this point, we cannot do better than to refer him to the chapter on classification in the volume before us, and also to the two succeeding chapters in the general pathology and the general therapeutics of the skin.

The present volume differs from that of the preceding American edition principally in containing a number of plates illustrating the anatomy of the skin and its appendages, and the various cutaneous diseases comprising those prepared by Mr. Wilson to illustrate his work on constitutional syphilis and syphilitic eruptions. The whole getting up of the volume is as perfect as possible, and we take unusual pleasure in announcing its presentation to the profession in this country. There are very few medical works which its members generally can have so much reason to desire to possess. By it the treatment of a badly taught and neglected class of diseases, that are the cause of very considerable suffering and annoyance to their patients, is rendered simple and rational, and removed from the special and isolated position which they at present occupy into the general category of diseases of the human frame.

W. F. A.